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COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AND STATE AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES,
COOPERATING.

STATES RELATIONS SERVICE, OFFICE OF
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WASHINGTON, D. C.

BOYS' AND GIRLS' CLUB WORK.

A SIMPLE TRAP NEST FOR POULTRY.

Prepared by the Animal Husbandry Division, Bureau of Animal Industry, United States Department of Agriculture.

A trap nest is a laying nest so arranged that after a hen enters it she is confined until released by the attendant. The use of trap nests is essential in breeding poultry for both egg production and exhibition, where pedigree records are used in selecting either the males or females, and has a place in mass selection for increasing the egg production. Trap nests are of value in weeding out poor layers and increasing the average egg yield of a flock by selecting and breeding, but are not extensively used on account of the large amount of labor required to operate them. Some poultry breeders trap-nest their pullets during their first six months of laying and use this as a basis in selecting their breeders for egg production.

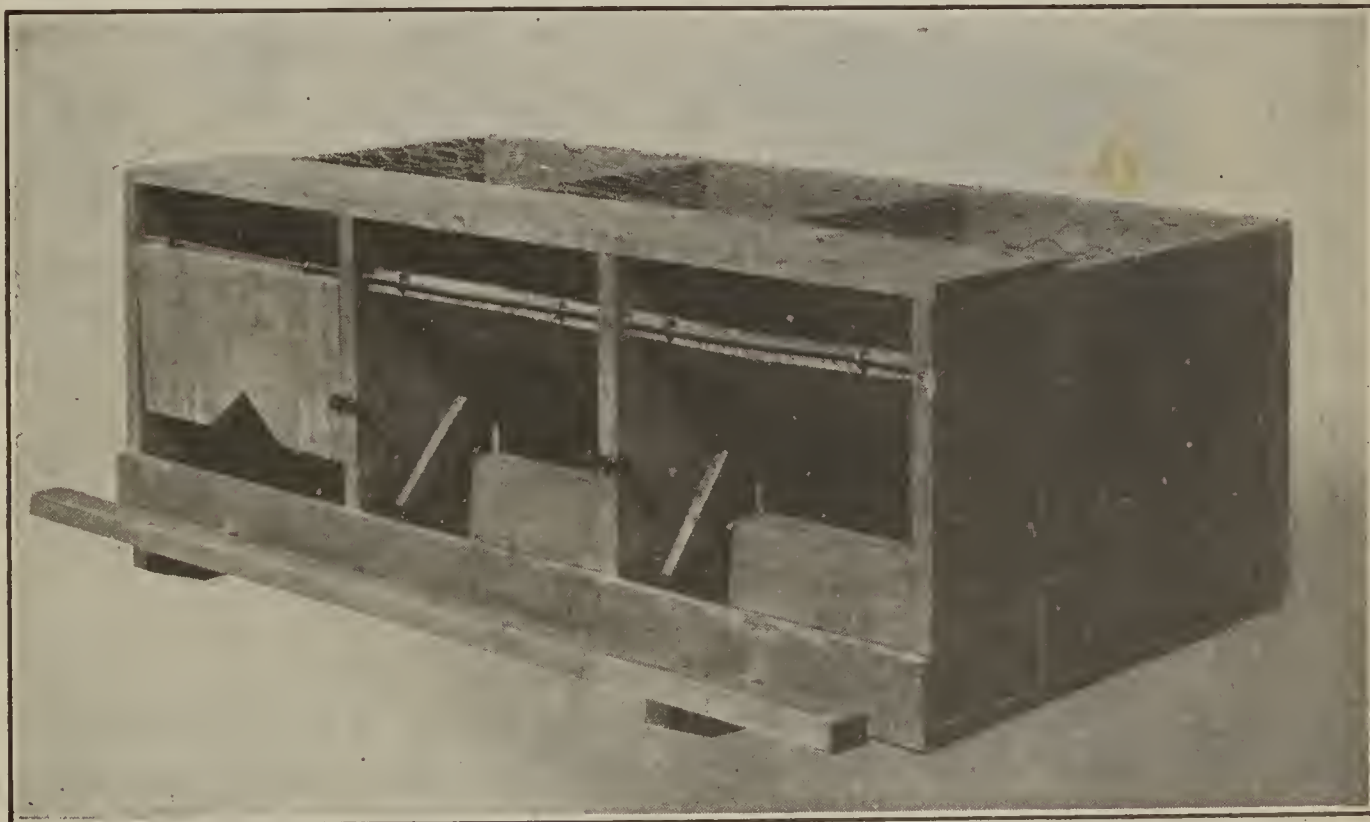


FIG. 1.—A good trap nest for hens.

HOW TRAP NESTS ARE USED.

One nest should be provided for 4 to 5 hens kept in flocks of 50 or more, while more trap nests per hen are necessary in smaller flocks. The hens are banded with numbered bands, and a record is kept of their egg production. The nests should be visited at least three times daily, and preferably four or five times, frequent trips being especially necessary when the hens are laying freely and during hot weather.

The trap nest shown in figure 1 may be attached to the underside of the dropping board, with the front facing the pen and arranged so that it can be easily removed, or it may be placed on the walls of the pen. If the nest is placed under the dropping board, the latter will serve as a top for the nest, and the rear of the nest may be of wire to allow good ventilation in warm

weather. If the nest is placed on the wall, slats or wire should be inserted from the front of the nest to the wall at a sharp angle to prevent the hens from roosting on the nest.

When the hen enters this nest, her back raises the door (*c*) (fig. 2), which releases the catch or trigger (*a*) and allows the door to shut. The catch should be set so that its edge just holds the door, which position is regulated by the screw or nail at the lower inside edge of the catch. A washer should be placed on the screw (*d*) between the catch and the side of the nest to prevent this catch from sticking. The guard (*b*) around the catch keeps the nesting material away from the catch. The length of the catch which supports the door and the triangular notch in the door may be varied slightly for very small or very large hens.

DIRECTIONS FOR CONSTRUCTING A THREE-COMPARTMENT TRAP NEST.

Cut four $\frac{7}{8}$ -inch boards for ends and partitions, 12 inches wide by 19 inches long, enough $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch boards 39 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, laid lengthwise, to cover the top, back, and bottom, and 1 strip

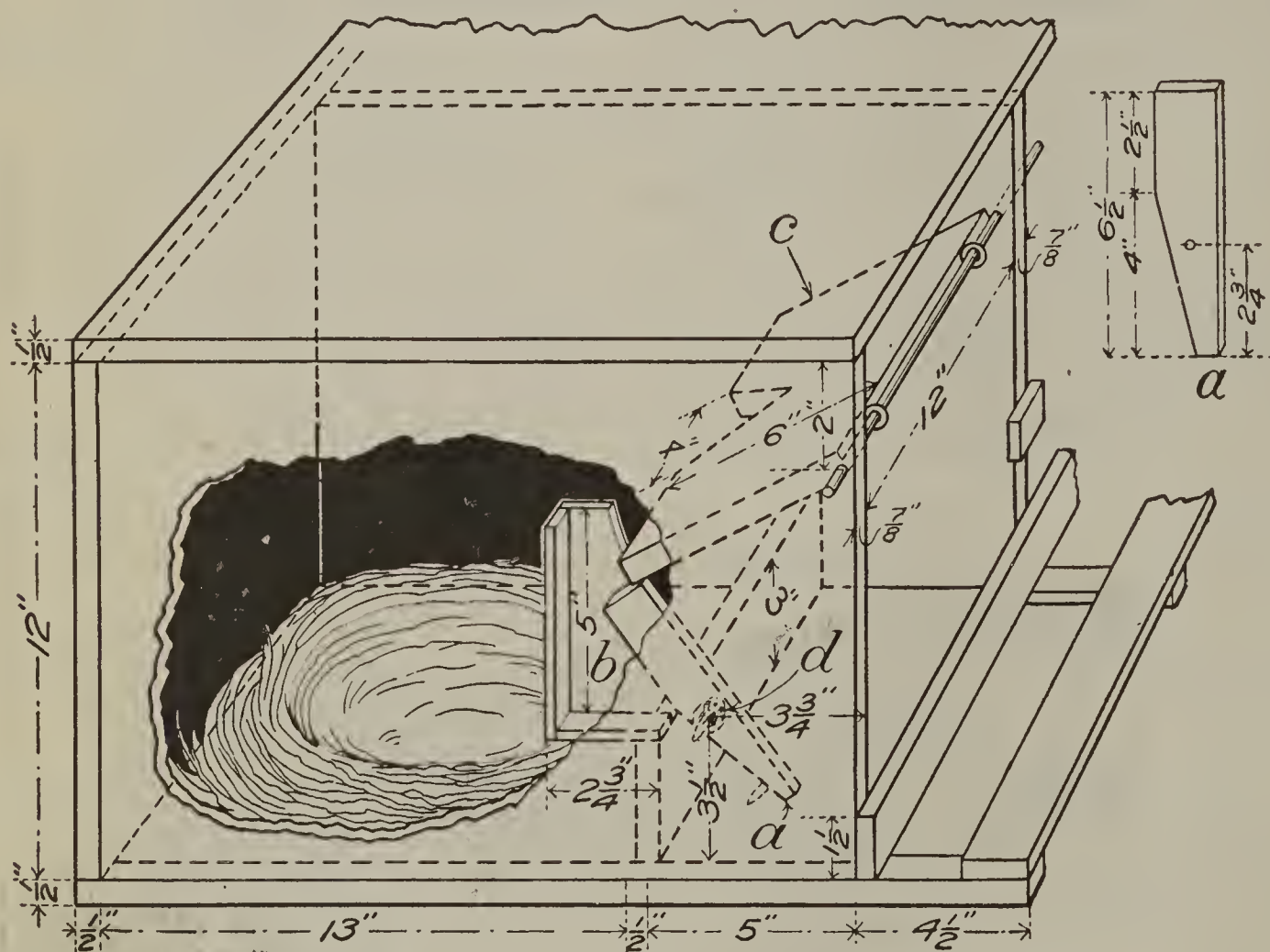


FIG. 2.—Working plans for a trap nest.

39 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches long and 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide for the front of the nests. Cut 3 pieces of $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch boards 12 inches long and 3 inches high to insert in the nest to hold the nesting material away from the door. Nail the top, back, and bottom to the ends and partitions (see fig. 2), insert the 3-inch strips in the nests, and make the guard (*b*), nailing it to the left side of the nest. Bore a hole in the catch (*a*) large enough so that the catch will move freely when screwed into position on the side. Place a washer on the screw between the catch and the side of the nest. Place a screw at the lower edge of the catch to stop it when set, so that the catch will just hold the door.

Make the doors (*c*) of $\frac{7}{8}$ -inch material, 12 inches by 6 inches, and cut a triangular notch in the center 4 inches wide. Put 2 screw eyes in the top of the doors and bore holes in the front of the nests 2 inches below the top (inside measurement), through which a $\frac{3}{16}$ -inch wire is run to support the doors.

Attach a narrow strip to the front of the nests for the hens to jump upon when entering the nests. Place a button or block of wood on the front of each partition to hold the door when the nest is closed.

If the nests are to be placed directly below the dropping board a wire top should be used on the nest, except for a 5-inch strip of wood on the front edge of the top to stiffen the nest.

NOTE.—This is one of a series of follow-up circulars (the K series) printed for the exclusive use of club members and club leaders. Other persons desiring poultry literature should write to their State agricultural college or ask for bulletins noted below.

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 (Issued October 10, 1917.)

